

# Formal vs. Casual Dress Attire

*“Anyone who aspires to top management knows that your personal appearance counts”. ~Donald K. Burleson*

With a highly competitive business industry it’s always better to look the part. To better explain what situation calls for what attire, we have identified three different categories of dress found in the work place:

## **Professional Attire – Formal**

## **Business Attire –Mid-Range**

## **Business Casual**

We have listed some basic standards for each category. Although these are the GSM’s suggested standards, you will always want to consider the culture, the organization and how an event is advertised when deciding what to wear. Each industry and function has its own standards, so when you’re in doubt ask your host. If you’re in doubt, dress-up. You can always remove a tie or blazer to dress down, but if you aren’t prepared for more formal wear you won’t be able to pull it off.

### **Professional Attire - Formal**

<b>Men</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business suit: Navy, black, grey in color</li> <li>• Shirt: Long sleeved, button down, cotton, light colored</li> <li>• Trousers: Long enough to cover your socks with slight break over your shoes.</li> <li>• Ties: that reach your belt line, preferably silk or high quality blend. The best choices are solid, stripes, or small pattern ties limited to three colors.</li> <li>• Shoes: Leather, black or brown classic lace-ups, shined, and in good repair.</li> <li>• Socks: Dark color, matches your suit; long enough to not show skin when crossing your legs.</li> <li>• Belt: Leather with small buckle; or suspenders but not both.</li> <li>• Facial hair: if worn, should be trimmed and well groomed.</li> </ul>
<b>Women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suit: Dark colored, matching coat or jacket, knee length skirt or slacks.</li> <li>• Employers tend to be biased more toward skirts.</li> <li>• Colors: Must match exactly or be complimentary (mix and match).</li> <li>• Shirts/blouses: Long or short sleeved (no spaghetti straps); cotton or synthetic. Be modest in regards to cleavage.</li> <li>• Hosiery: Strongly suggested in colors of nude or light natural colors.</li> <li>• Shoes: Closed toe, closed heel shoes that can be walked in without wobbling.</li> <li>• Heels: Up to 1 to 2 inches.</li> <li>• Jewelry: One or two pieces and only one earring per ear.</li> <li>• Purse: Tailored with shoulder strap (to keep your hands free for greeting).</li> <li>• Conservative business make-up and nail polish.</li> </ul>

### **Business Attire - Mid-Range**

<b>Men</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blazer with Dockers; Dress slacks, khakis, or corduroys, with casual jacket and leather belt.</li> <li>• Pressed long or short-sleeved, button down shirt (tucked in). No tie required.</li> <li>• Collared polo-type shirts, crew-neck sweaters, cardigan sweaters, or vests are appropriate.</li> <li>• Socks: Dark in color, should be mid-calf length so that no skin is visible when you sit down.</li> <li>• Shoes: Leather loafers, oxfords, or boots.</li> <li>• Facial hair: if worn, should be trimmed and well groomed.</li> </ul>
<b>Women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jacket or sweater set with slacks, dress, skirt no shorter than three inches above your knees.</li> <li>• Accessorize in lieu of jacket (scarf)</li> <li>• Hosiery may not be required.</li> <li>• Dress straps should be at least one inch wide.</li> <li>• Shoes: Loafers, pumps, slides, mules, and conservative sandals.</li> </ul>



### Business Casual – Dress Down Fridays

<b>Men</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dockers or khaki pants.</li> <li>• Short or long sleeve shirt/button up or pullover/polo shirts</li> <li>• Shoes: Penny loafers or lace up (no sneakers)</li> </ul>
<b>Women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skirts with casual cut or slacks.</li> <li>• Common to wear cotton shirts, but no t-shirts.</li> </ul>

### General Tips on a Conservative Look

<b>Definite Do's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laundered shirts with light to medium starch, hung (not folded to avoid Creases).</li> <li>• Clean clothes that do not show wear.</li> <li>• Tucked in shirt.</li> <li>• Pants breaking just above the shoe.</li> <li>• Shirts: If long sleeved, reaches the base of the hand and shows slightly when wearing a jacket.</li> <li>• Polished leather shoes in good repair.</li> <li>• Conservative watch.</li> <li>• Neatly groomed hair that is clean and out of your eyes.</li> <li>• Clean and neat nails of appropriate length.</li> <li>• Trench coats should be worn if outerwear is needed.</li> <li>• Umbrellas should be a solid dark color (no logos).</li> <li>• Hair cut and combed/Clean shaven/Trimmed facial hair</li> <li>• Cover tattoos.</li> <li>• Minimal jewelry and make-up</li> </ul>
<b>Definite Don'ts:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White or ankle socks.</li> <li>• Jeans, casual pants, or shorts.</li> <li>• Tight and revealing clothes.</li> <li>• Athletic wear, t-shirts, fleece, or wind suits.</li> <li>• Athletic shoes, bare feet or open toe sandals, and hiking boots.</li> <li>• No caps or hats.</li> <li>• Sleeveless, strapless or spaghetti strap clothing.</li> <li>• Cropped tops, or any other top that shows your stomach.</li> <li>• Shoes that expose your toes (dressy open toe shoes only).</li> <li>• Bangles or dangly earrings. No visible body piercings (exception - women's pierced ears).</li> <li>• Heavy cologne.</li> <li>• Gum chewing.</li> <li>• Shorts of any kind or length.</li> </ul>